

GCSE

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Examiners' Report

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1) Paper 1F and 1H : Listening and Responding

Examiners' Report

The tasks and the topics in the papers chosen were in accordance with the syllabus. As usual the questions were targeted at each of the possible grades to differentiate candidates across the ability range. The standard achieved by the candidates this year was slightly better than last year.

LISTENING PAPER 1F - FOUNDATION TIER

This paper tests listening skill appropriate to grades C- G The paper required minimal writing of the target language and candidates had to answer one question by writing 4 to 5 words in Urdu. These answers were marked for communication of the required points from the listening text only, irrespective of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

Q 1- 6

The icons used this year were much clearer than last year and posed no problems to the candidates.

The majority of the candidates managed to answer these questions without any difficulty. A few did not understand the Urdu words for "zoo" and ticked the icon for museum as it showed the skeleton of a dinosaur.

Q 7

The question (targeted at C grade) was about reporting a lost item and candidates were required to fill in information about the lost item. This was the only question in the Foundation Tier where they were supposed to write in Urdu (mostly single words). Although they are not penalised for spelling, it was disappointing to note that a large number of candidates could not write the words "wallet" and "black" in Urdu. A few candidates could not even write the correct spelling of "bus" in Urdu. The content of the wallet (£70) could have been written in English but some candidates struggled to write the 70 figure as an Urdu number and lost marks.

Q 8 and 9

The questions were about shopping at a garden centre and candidates were asked to tick 3 items for each question. Some candidates got confused between the flower seeds and the pot of flowers, while others could not follow the rubric and ticked more than 3 items. Generally these questions were answered correctly by a large number of candidates.

Q10

This question was also targeted at C grade. Although no writing was involved in this question, a large number of candidates could not get the correct sequencing and either got it partially right or totally wrong and lost marks. Candidates are not being prepared thoroughly enough to tackle these types of questions.

Q 11

Also targeted at C grade, this question was about helping around the house. Quite a large number of candidates answered this question correctly. A few, who could not read the instructions, got it partially or totally wrong.

Q 12-15

These questions were about favourite hobbies and required a tick against the correct icon. The majority of candidates managed these questions very well.

Q16-19

With a similar layout to the above questions, this topic concerned jobs and professions. Generally the candidates scored full marks.

Q20-23

This topic was personal identification and candidates had to tick the correct box. Some of these questions have been asked in past papers, but quite a few candidates still struggle to distinguish between a person having a moustache or a beard. There were some Urdu vocabulary problems in identifying a girl with curly hair and a boy with spots on his face.

Q 24

This question, also targeted at grade C, was about "Namaz" and similar in format to question 11. By and large the candidates achieved good marks in this question. It did pose problems for candidates with limited reading ability of the target language rubric and texts.

Q 25

This question required the candidates to listen to information in Urdu about fitness activities and complete the grid in English about "what activity" and "why they like it". The majority of the candidates had no problems in extracting the right information. However, some failed to complete the grid correctly as they could not understand the words "gardening" and "fresh air" (both words in Urdu have been used and asked in the past papers). A few candidates lost marks because of poor English vocabulary.

LISTENING PAPER 1H- HIGHER TIER

The overall performance for this paper was similar to last year. The paper proved to be balanced and differentiated well across the range of abilities of the candidates and reflected the appropriate levels for which it was set. As mentioned in the last Examiners' Report, some candidates are still being entered by their centres for the wrong tier and missing out on grades they truly deserve.

Q 1- 4

An overlap from the Foundation tier paper, these questions did not pose any problems in general.

Q 5

Also an overlap from the Foundation tier, though this question proved to be a little difficult for some candidates. As they required a fairly good level of reading ability as well, some got it partially right, while others managed to get full marks.

Q6

This question tested candidates' ability to understand spoken Urdu and fill in the gaps with appropriate Urdu words. Quite a large number of candidates scored some or even full marks. Some failed to select the right word to complete the sentence, while others could not write a single word of Urdu and did not score any marks at all. It was disappointing to note that some candidates at the Higher Tier could not write the correct spelling of the words "older", "far" and "help" in Urdu.

Q7

Candidates, generally did well in this question, which was an overlap from the Foundation tier.

Q8

This question was also an overlap from the Foundation tier and required both reading and writing ability in Urdu. By and large candidates did well and only a few did not score marks. Again there were problems with Urdu vocabulary for simple words like "wallet" and "black".

Q 9

This question tested candidates' ability in sequencing an event after listening to an extract about an invitation to a dinner party. Only a few candidates, who could follow the events as they took place and also could read the sentences for rearranging, did extremely well and scored full marks. However, quite a large number of candidates could not understand the instructions and lost marks.

Q10

This question involved 5 target language sub-questions and answers about a festival (Christmas). A few candidates managed to write the key word and scored some marks, while others with a good writing ability did very well. It was again disappointing to note that at this Higher tiers entry, quite a large number of candidates could not write the Urdu words for "Christmas", "October", "card", "brother", "gifts" and "relatives".

Q11

This question about five announcements proved a little difficult for candidates who could not follow or read the target language rubrics and text. Some candidates answered correctly but put numbers in all six boxes and lost one mark. Candidates entered for the Higher Tier should be able to read and understand the target language instructions.

Q12

This question was about different views about the medical profession and candidates were supposed to tick the right statement. Although no writing was involved in this question, candidates with limited Urdu reading ability scored poor marks. By and large this question was answered well and the majority of candidates gained full marks.

Q 13

This question, about Imran Khan and his charity work, and required candidates to answer in English. Most of the candidates answered sections (a), (b), (c) and (g) correctly. The answer to (a) was "a politician" but some candidates could not understand the Urdu word for a politician and gave irrelevant answers. For (d) and (e) although the questions were clear and specific, quite a large number of candidates gave overlapping answers. The majority of candidates answered only half the question for (f) and gave only one reason why Imran was inspired to start his charity work. (The 2 reasons were quite clear from the listening text: his mother died of cancer and she could not get proper treatment). The answer to the last question about the hospital being named after his mother was generally done well by the majority of candidates. However, there were some disappointing responses to this question where candidates thought that the hospital was named after his aunt, his uncle or his father.

2) Paper 2F and 2H : Speaking

General:

This is the fourth year in which exam papers have been based upon the new GCSE syllabus. There were approximately 3,000 entries, approximately the same as last year.

The overall impression this year is that there were few significant problems in the actual conduct of the examinations. There are always some centres where some errors occur but the experienced team of Assessors and Moderators are well equipped to deal with them and to concentrate on the job of giving a fair mark to the candidates' performances.

The general impression this year was that the performance of the candidates was not noticeably different from last year.

Foundation Paper: 2F

Only a minority of Urdu candidates (nearly 500 out of some 3000, or about 15%) was entered for this component at Foundation level. This is a slight increase, which perhaps reflects the growing number of candidates whose parents have been born and brought up in the UK. This pattern is quite normal for Urdu as it reflects the ability and the familiarity of the candidature with the language examined.

This Paper is designed to test candidates in the G-C ability range and can be said to have discriminated successfully between these ends of the range. In fact, very few candidates failed to score enough marks to qualify for an F on this component.

Once again, it is disappointing to have to state that about 20% of Foundation Level candidates scored very highly in this and it would have been much better for them to have been entered for the Higher Tier, so that they can have a chance of reaching a higher grade. It is vital to doing justice to candidates that their abilities in each of the four skill areas is taken into consideration and entries made accordingly. It is clear that some centres blanket enter some candidates for Foundation in all four components of the exam, presumably on the basis of their lack of written skills

Candidates had to perform one A and one B Rôle-Play and take part in a conversation on two topics, one of their choice, presumably prepared, and one chosen from the syllabus by the teacher examiner. In general the Foundation Level Rôle-plays were well performed and there were no significant problems.

Detailed consideration of specific Rôle-plays are given below:

Rôle-Play A:

The A Rôle-Plays are designed to test the performance of the lower end G-E of the ability range. The candidates have to perform simple transactions involving shopping.

Some required candidates to buy two items from the six pictures provided as stimulus. The candidate had to greet the examiner, buy two items selected from the pictures, ask the price, and say thank you and goodbye. Others required them to buy one item and then state size, colour, etc. The Teacher-Examiner needs to ensure that candidates do all the tasks, including greetings, thanks and goodbye. Most of

them do a difficult job very competently, but we do hear tapes where a candidate has failed to buy two items, or omits to include the necessary phrases. In such cases teacher-examiners should prompt the candidates, using such phrases as: *awr kwch chahiye?*

One of the main failings of weaker candidates is the use of English words, as in A2, "pen" whose Urdu equivalent "*qalam*" is not at all obscure or difficult. The problem is that such English words are commonly used in Urdu in everyday spoken language. However in an exam situation candidates should be expected to use the Urdu words. In a French oral exam 'pen' would certainly not be acceptable. In such cases it is entirely legitimate for the Teacher-Examiner to ask the candidate "*Urdu mein pen ko kya kehte heyen?*" Although candidates cannot get the maximum marks according to the mark grid, they can get 7 or 8 marks instead of perhaps only 5 or 6 if they were not prompted.

The same argument applies to 'apples' "*seb*" in A3, while in A6 there are items where the English word is acceptable, namely "*jumper*" but not 'trousers' whose Urdu equivalent is "*patloon*", which interestingly, seems to be derived from the French "*pantalon*".

Teacher-Examiners have, in general, conducted these Rôle-Plays well. It needs to be said, however, that candidates performances are dependent upon not just the words and appropriate interventions of the Teacher-Examiner but by the tone in which the Rôle-Plays (and the Conversations) are conducted. It is important for the candidate to be made to feel as comfortable as possible, and a friendly and sympathetic approach is likely to bring out a better performance from the candidate than a stiff and formal one.

That being said only a very small minority of candidates who entered the exam at Foundation Level scored less than 7 marks on the A Rôle-Plays.

Rôle-Play B:

These Rôle-Plays are designed to test the mid-range of candidates and are 'Overlap' tasks, taken by both Foundation and Higher candidates. These Rôle-plays are based on symbols but there are statements in English telling the candidate what to do. The majority of candidates clearly knew what the symbols meant and knew what to do even if, in some cases, their lack of Urdu did not enable them to complete the tasks successfully.

Most of these Rôle-Plays caused no significant problems either for candidates or for Teacher-Examiners. In the B Rôle-Plays the main difficulty for weaker candidates was not in interpreting the symbols, which caused little confusion, but having sufficient Urdu to cope and the use of English words for which there are simple everyday Urdu equivalents.

Students and their teachers need to study the Key Vocabulary in the Specification for this exam and candidates should expect to be tested on their knowledge of those words. Of course it is legitimate for examiners to include a proportion of words that are NOT included in the prescribed vocabulary. (See Specification)

As far as English words are concerned, Key Vocabulary words are often words deliberately tested, such as days of the week, times and numbers, especially 1½ and 2½, colours, etc. Several of the B Rôle-Plays contained these vocabulary items.

It may be of use to centres to discuss one or two of the B Rôle-Plays that did produce some difficulties for some candidates:

B1 The second utterance in this Rôle-Play caused some problems, mainly due to the fact that weaker candidates were unclear about days of the week or times of day. Some candidates simply said '*I want to go on Monday*, while others mixed up '*morning, midday or afternoon*.' The Teacher-Examiner should ask the candidate to clarify what they wanted and give them the chance to get a mark. Some did but most didn't.

B3 In this Rôle-Play candidates had to say what kind of video film they liked: comedy, horror or love. This caused difficulties for a surprisingly large number of candidates, who clearly could not produce the right Urdu words for these - '*hansne wali*' or '*myzahia*' for funny, '*daraouni*' for horror, and '*muhabbat wali*' or '*piyar ki*' for love.

B4 This is another example where the Teacher-Examiner could help weaker candidates get a better mark. In the final utterance the candidate has to ask for a clean knife, fork or spoon. When candidates have used the English words the Teacher-Examiner should have asked something like "*Urdu mein knife ko kya kehte heyne?*"

Again the candidate could have gained some marks.

B7 Again, the use of common English words can cause problems. In the first utterance the candidate has to suggest going to the zoo. The Urdu word is '*chiriya ghar*'. When candidates have used the English words the Teacher-Examiner should have asked something like "*Urdu mein zoo ko kya kehte heyne?*"

Again the candidate could have gained some marks.

Higher Tier 2H

At this level candidates perform one B Rôle-Play and one C Rôle-Play, and then hold a conversation on two topics as in Foundation but with questions involving greater complexity.

Over three-quarters of the candidates were entered for Higher Tier and the performance was, on the whole, very good. There is some evidence that the number of candidates achieving maximum marks has fallen slightly but that is unsurprising as the number of candidates who are second, third or even fourth generation settlers increases and sustained direct contact with the language decreases. That being said Urdu is in the fortunate position of having speakers maintaining strong family links and spoken contact via the internet, and watching Urdu channels on Satellite TV helps to keep the spoken language alive.

Rôle-Play C:

These are designed to test the more able candidates aiming for Grade C and above and are taken only by candidates entered for the Higher Tier. Candidates have to negotiate unpredictable situations using appropriate and accurate language. There are two marking criteria, one for communication and one for accuracy.

The main point in these Rôle-Plays is that candidates need to glean information from the stimulus which is in Urdu. Underneath are 5 bullet points in Urdu, two of which are marked with a symbol '!' which indicates to the candidate that they have to respond to an unpredictable question from the Teacher-Examiner. **Those who cannot read Urdu cannot know what key points they are expected to communicate.**

I am happy to report that the examining team has unanimously reported that the C Rôle-Plays have been better handled by both Teacher-Examiners and candidates this year. It is vital that Teacher-examiners take the trouble of reading the handbook, doing some preparation and reading out the introduction given there to get the Rôle-play going.

Once again, apart from being unable to read Urdu, a common problem was incomplete performance. It has been made clear in the guidance notes that the Teacher-Examiner must **not** rephrase unpredictable questions and must not give away key vocabulary in what they say to the candidates. Quite a few questions are effectively in two parts, as for example, in C2 point 2, where the candidate has to ask for information about the job. If the candidate asks only one piece of information, the teacher should prompt by saying something like "kwch awr puchna hai?" However if the teacher says "tankwah ke bare men" OR "awqat ke bare men?" The candidate has effectively been given key words and cannot then achieve more than 5-6 marks. The same applies to many other Rôle-Play tasks, such as C3 task 3, where details are required, and in C6, tasks 2 and 4, and in C7, task 2.

One particular Rôle-Play caused unexpected difficulties. In C8, based on a visit to the Zoo, one of the unpredictable responses required the candidate to respond to the teacher's question "*What animals didn't you like and why?*" This is of course a two-part question but the problems arose because about a quarter of Teacher-Examiners asked "*What animals did you like, and why?*" This careless reading of the Rôle-Play scenario did not help the candidates who could only answer the question put to them.

Another point that needs to be made is that, at this level, candidates are expected to give more than one word or one-phrase answers to most of the questions in order to achieve full marks. **The Mark criteria clearly states that the candidate must produce extended replies in order to get high marks.** The guidance notes provided were sufficiently detailed to enable the Teacher-Examiner to play his or her part successfully; the fact that many did get it right indicates that it can be done.

Conversation

In this element of the Oral examination candidates are expected to prepare one topic instead of two. The second topic is now selected by the Teacher-Examiner from two alternatives supplied by Edexcel which are written in the Handbook following the B Rôle-Play performed by the candidate. Unfortunately some centres did not follow this instruction.

The Foundation and Higher conversations were, by and large, adequately conducted. Most difficulties arose when the types of questions did not let the candidates show their ability. It is vitally important that even the weakest candidates be given questions that test their ability to express Past, Present and Future tenses. This is vital if they are to achieve a C grade. The handbook does contain suitable questions for each topic at both levels but these are not intended to be a list of questions to be worked through from beginning to end. Questions should be tailored to suit the

interests and abilities of the candidates and also teachers should pay attention to the candidates' responses and adapt their questions accordingly.

It is recommended that at Foundation Level candidates should be gently eased into their topic with very simple straightforward questions to get them going and that Higher Level candidates should be started off with a few Foundation Level questions to warm them up, rather than going straight in with difficult questions.

Please note that nearly all the questions given in the Handbook are open-ended questions, not those requiring yes/no answers, which tell us nothing about the candidates' linguistic ability.

The second problem was when Teacher-Examiners failed to cover more than one topic. In such cases, candidates cannot obtain more than half-marks: 15/30.

It has already been noted that the Teacher-Examiner's performance is as important as that of the candidate in an oral examination. A sympathetic and friendly approach is always better than rigid formality. Sometimes an improvement can be achieved simply by avoiding having the microphone too near the examiner and too far from the candidate. Taking an exam is a highly stressful business for both candidate and Teacher-Examiner and every step should be taken to make the candidate feel more relaxed.

As to candidates' performance, it is clear that there is a wide range of ability levels. That being said it is gratifying to note that, unlike in the main European languages, most candidates were entered for the higher level. Assessment of their performance indicates that in the vast majority of cases, it was right to do so.

Recording

In the light of several incidents this year, it is necessary to direct teachers' attention to some important points regarding recordings

- 1 Before starting the exam, it is vital to make sure that the tape recorder is working properly.
- 2 If possible, use a separate microphone rather than a built in one. The sound quality is so much better.
- 3 Point the microphone towards the candidate. It is more important to hear the candidate than the Teacher-Examiner.
- 4 After every recording wind back the tape for a few seconds and replay to ensure that the candidate's performance has been recorded and is audible.
- 5 If you use the pause button after recording introductions, candidate numbers, etc, or between candidates, PLEASE MAKE SURE that you switch off the pause button before conducting the next exam. If there is no candidate's voice on tape they can't receive marks and the centre will have to apply for special consideration from the Board.

Organisation of Material in Centres

The main job of the examiners is to assess and mark the candidates' performance and that is a job requiring intense concentration. When material arrives from centres with tapes that are un- or partially labelled it is extremely time-consuming and wearisome to sort out unlabelled cassettes. Labels are given in the Handbook and should be used and fully completed and on the cassette itself the centre number, tape number and Sides A and B clearly marked. Also when recording candidates, clearly state the candidate's name and number before starting each examination. While it is clearly unrealistic to expect only one candidate on each side of a tape, it is possible to use c60 cassettes that can comfortably fit two candidates on each side.

Teacher-Assessment (for "A" centres)

I make no apologies for repeating this section from last year's report.

The Oral component of the exam is the only teacher-assessed part of the GCSE apart from written coursework (4C.) It may be helpful to mention a few points regarding assessment.

Assessing oral performance is not an easy job: it requires concentration and recourse to repeatedly comparing one performance against others. It is often necessary to rewind and compare conversations from different candidates so that a judgment can be made on which performance is better, or to hear parts of Rôle-plays more than once to hear how well a candidate has negotiated an unpredictable element.

It is appreciated that many teachers do want to play a part in their students' assessment. If that is the case, then we suggest that they should not conduct and assess at the same time. If the Teacher-Examiner is trying to mark the oral at the same as conducting it his or her full attention can be given neither to the conduct of the oral nor to assessing it. When a number of candidates have done their exam, the Teacher-Examiner should listen to the tapes again and then start to assess the performances.

Teacher-Examiners should not worry about trying to assess the candidate's performance at the same time as conducting it, but concentrate solely on conducting the Rôle-plays and conversation. It is gratifying to note that fewer centres have attempted to conduct and to mark their candidates examinations this year. The ratio of A to B centers is now about 1:6.

It is gratifying to note that the Moderating team reported far less need to remark Teacher- Examiner marked orals than in the previous two years.

3) Paper 3F and 3H : Reading and Responding

Paper 3F: Reading and Responding

Examiner's Report

The current format of the new Specification is now well established and this year again some 3,000 candidates were entered for the examination. The split between tiers was different compared to past years as even more candidates were entered for the Higher Tier and very few for the Foundation Tier although some candidates would have benefited more had they been entered for the Foundation Tier.

Paper 3F is designed to test candidates in the G-C ability range. No lengthy written responses are required for this paper. Candidates are required to read the rubric in order to attempt the questions correctly.

Detailed consideration of individual questions is provided below:

Questions 1 and 2

These questions required candidates to match pictures to individual words and put the appropriate letter against the correct word. There were no major problems with these questions but it was surprising to see that quite a few candidates did not recognise the word "gaird" and mistook it for the snooker table. A similar exercise took place last year and it appears that candidates are more used to the English word 'ball' and don't use the Urdu word. Some candidates ticked randomly and got the odd answer correct as a result.

Question 3

This question required the candidates to tick five correct means of travel out of the given ten words but a majority of candidates ticked randomly and did not score good marks. A few candidates scored full marks for this question but the majority brought attention to a possible decreasing ability to read and understand.

Question 4

This question was about places for recreation and candidates had to match the word in the box to a short statement. Most candidates scored at least four marks for this exercise while the able candidates scored full marks. The candidates who did not do well in this question would have done so because of poor vocabulary as the mark scheme had been amended to include 'A' (Saahil) for swimming as some people do swim at the beach.

Question 5 (overlap)

Candidates had to read a short passage about the advantages and disadvantages of television and then tick five correct statements from the ten given. This required careful reading of the text. Most candidates scored full marks but a few ticked randomly and lost marks. The surprising fact was that the candidates who did not perform well in questions 2 and 4 scored full marks for Q5 where they had to read longer sentences and note the difference in meaning.

Once again the number of candidates who ticked more than the required number of answers was lower compared to last year. Candidates must be encouraged to check the required number of answers as one mark is deducted for each extra answer.

Question 6 (overlap)

This was a question that required candidates to read a text about the week's weather report and select one of three short statements about each day's weather. Most candidates scored full marks for this question and the weaker lost one or two marks.

Question 7 (overlap)

This was a new question type for this paper but the candidates are familiar with this format in the listening paper. Candidates were required to read a stimulus passage about going to a live football match and put the six given sentences in order by placing the correct corresponding number against the sentence, the first one having been done as the example. The able candidates scored full marks but weaker candidates inserted numbers randomly and scored one or two marks only.

Question 8 (overlap)

This question was based on a short text about cars. Candidates had to read the text and then do a gap filling exercise with the help of vocabulary given at the top of the page. These words were synonyms of vocabulary used in the text. Able candidates completed this exercise successfully but the less able either 'lifted' words from the text or tried to fit in any words at random. They obviously did not either understand the rubric or could not read and understand the sentences.

Question 9 (English question)

This question was based on a short notice about the change of library opening hours and candidates were required to answer questions in English. Some candidates did very well and scored full marks but others could not read the time correctly and wrote the time wrong way round 10.00 to 7.00 rather than 7.00 to 10.00 hence losing marks. Quite a few candidates were not familiar with the word 'talib ilm' (student) and gave quite a variety of answers.

This year, for the first time no candidates answered this question in Urdu.

Question 10 (English question)

This question was about an advertisement about air travel. Candidates with good reading skills scored full marks but a number of candidates could not differentiate between "fly from" from "fly to" thus answering the question wrongly and losing marks.

Higher Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

The Higher Paper is designed to discriminate between candidates aiming for the C to A* Grades, although a D can be awarded to those not achieving a C. The paper consisted of eight questions, four of which (questions 1 to 4) were overlap questions. As expected, candidates tackled these questions better at Higher Level than those doing them at Foundation Level.

Q1(overlap) Candidates had to read a short text about the advantages and disadvantages of television and then tick five correct statements from the ten given. This required careful reading of the text. Most candidates scored full marks or nearly full marks for this question. Only a few lost marks for ticking more than the required five.

Q2 (overlap) This question required the reading of a short text about a week's weather report and tick correct answers out of three very short weather definitions for each day. Most candidates scored full marks for this question.

Q3 (overlap) This question required the reading of a short stimulus about going to a live football match and putting the six sentences in sequence by placing numbers against them. Most candidates' performance was very good despite this type of question being introduced for the first time in the reading paper.

Q4 (overlap) This question was based on a short text about cars. Candidates had to read the text and do a gap filling exercise with the help of synonyms given at the top of the exercise. Most candidates scored 4 to 5 marks but there were those who picked vocabulary from the text and could not differentiate between the synonyms given.

Q5 This question required the candidates to read a text about the forthcoming Olympic games and match two sentence halves by writing the appropriate letter in the box. Most candidates scored full marks for this while a minority filled in words randomly, hence losing two marks.

Q6 This question was about different ways of spending free time. The candidates were required to read a text about various youngsters describing how they spent their free time and then linking their names to particular activities. Once again a majority of candidates scored full marks.

Q7 This question required written answers in Urdu. Candidates had to read the text about the benefits of a computer and its use by almost everybody. Quite a few candidates scored full or almost full marks. There tended to be some overlap of answers but if they did not answer about e-mail and its benefits, they did not score marks.

Q8 This question consisted of a text about a common event in cities of England i.e. fairs. The questions were in English and candidates were expected to answer them in English. Candidates had problems trying to translate 'kabbaddee' but any reasonable translation was accepted. Only a small minority did not attempt this question and this year only one candidate answered in Urdu. The majority of candidates scored full marks or nearly full marks.

4) Paper 4F and 4H : Writing - Terminal Examination

Examiners' Report

The format and requirements of both papers were exactly the same as of previous year. Both papers placed comparable demands on candidates to previous years. Each paper seemed a fair and accessible test for the range of candidates at which it was aimed. All questions worked very well and no questions posed candidates particular difficulties.

4F - Foundation Writing

Although the general standard of performance was similar to last year, there was a significant increase in the number of candidates who left a blank script or merely copied verbatim from the stimulus. As a result, an alarming number (about 8%) of candidates scored no marks.

Question 1 required candidates to make a list of 10 items for an Eid party. It was disappointing to see that only a few could come up with 9 or 10 words for their list. Generally most candidates produced 5 - 6 words. Candidates lost marks for copying the example, repeating the same items, using English words and listing the inappropriate items.

In Question 2, candidates had to interpret 5 pictures as nouns and produce 5 verbs, relating to the gender, in first person singular present tense. Most candidates were able to interpret 4 pictures correctly but found it difficult to interpret the picture regarding Fareeda's activity i.e. exercise.

In Question 3, candidates had to cover 5 bullet points about their visit to Pakistan. This question proved to be accessible to most candidates. Candidates scored high marks for communication and content, only losing marks where oversight or omission occurred. Marks for accuracy were variable.

Questions 4(a) and 4(b) were overlap questions and candidates had to attempt one of these questions. They were required to write a letter to their friend either about their school or describing themselves and their family. In both questions they had to cover five bullet points producing a range of tenses and expressing their opinion. Similar to previous years, only a small number of foundation tier candidates attempted one of these questions. Most responses were short and simple. However, a few candidates performed well and produced very pleasing answers.

4H - Higher Writing

The overall performance at higher tier was much better this year. There were more than 50 candidates who scored full marks and a majority of candidates gained good marks. However some candidates who apparently had a good command of Urdu lost marks because they did not follow the rubric. It is vital that candidates have a training in reading and understanding the rubric and carry out the task as required.

Candidates were required to answer one of the two overlap questions and also one of the two higher tier questions.

Questions 1(a) and 1(b) proved to be the equally popular among candidates. Most candidates produced coherent responses, much longer than required, but clearly at ease with a range of tenses, opinions and descriptions.

Questions 2 (a) and 2(b) were higher tier questions and candidates were required to write an essay about either shopping in Pakistan or favourite game/sport. Both questions were equally popular and accessible and worked very well. It was evident that almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the higher tier examination as the standard of responses was very good. The best ones were coherent, well linked essays which addressed all the bullet points, developing them with opinions and reasons.

5) Paper 4C : Coursework Option

Examiners' Report

This year coursework was much less popular than the terminal writing paper as there was a significant decline in the number of candidates entered for this option. Several big centres chose to enter only the weakest candidates for coursework. Most of the samples sent for moderation were very poor both in terms of quality of performance and teachers guidance for candidates. Many centres produced very short pieces of work of an unsatisfactory standard, with practically no proper stimulus material. As a result, the overall standard of performance was quite disappointing. However it was pleasing to note that candidates from some small centres produced original and creative pieces of work in which they manipulated the language successfully.

As in previous years, a number of centres were not familiar with the rules governing the coursework option. A failure to comply with the rules can disadvantage candidates. Moderators once again had to encounter one or more of the following problems in many cases:

- Front sheets (CF1) were not correctly filled in and/or signed. Some centres used old front sheets where candidate's signature was not required.
- There were either very weak or unsuitable to the task stimulus or no stimulus at all.
- First and/or final drafts were not included in the sample.
- First drafts were corrected by the teacher.
- Centres' failure to ensure the difference between the stimulus and reference material.
- Groups of candidates who produced identical pieces of work and therefore could not score higher marks.
- Over generous and or highly inconsistent marking by the Centre.
- Excessively long and irrelevant or too short pieces of work which could not score high marks.
- Combinations of coursework units which were totally unacceptable i.e. two pieces of work on the same topic area e.g. an essay about a holiday and description of a town (both Home and Abroad) an article about a famous person and a film review (both Media, Entertainment and Youth Culture). In such cases, one piece of work was discounted completely to the disadvantage of many able candidates.
- Centres' failure to ensure that the work submitted by candidates is their own and they have not copied it from any source and they have not received any outside assistance.

6) Statistics GCSE Urdu 2006

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	40	35	30	26	22	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 1H - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	148	142	136	130	122	118	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	27	23	19	15	11	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 2H - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	140	134	128	123	117	114	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 3F - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	35	31	27	24	21	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	148	140	132	124	120	118	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	34	31	28	25	22	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	141	136	131	126	121	118	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4C - Written Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Overall Subject Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Total Uniform Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0

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